

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

EDITED BY G. BAILEY, JR.

CINCINNATI,

Tuesday Morning, August 18, 1840.

REVIEW OF MR. RANKIN'S LETTER, OR Objections to the Support of a Pro-Slavery Ticket.

Having at last made room for ourselves, we shall proceed to examine the letter of the Rev. John Rankin, published in the Philanthropist of August 4th.

Mr. Rankin is distinguished for the inflexibility of his moral character, and his devotion to the anti-slavery cause. His mind operates generally with great steadiness and much caution, and his views on most subjects are clear. What he has written on the question of political action, we must receive as the last result of a careful examination controlled by honesty of purpose. His letter contains perhaps the pith of all the reasons that have been urged in behalf of the support of a *slavery-ticket*. Let us then with all deliberation and respect consider his argument.

A Wrong Position.

The first of his positions to be noticed is that, although the anti-slavery cause is of more importance than any now agitated, "it is not the only one that claims attention." Hence, "if two candidates are before the people, and neither of them an abolitionist," he "will vote for the one that" he "believes upon the whole will do most for the country." We use now his own language, but this does not clearly exhibit his ground. He concedes that Garrison and the leaders of the whig party have committed themselves to the Slave-Power. Still, he will support them, for the reason just mentioned. His real position then, a position which he holds in common with the rest of Garrison abolitionists, is this.—If all the candidates of both parties are openly hostile to abolition, and formally pledged to the support of slavery, he will nevertheless vote for those who, "he believes upon the whole, will do most for the country."

We desire the position wrong for the following reasons.

It Involves a Contradiction.

All true abolitionists, with Mr. Rankin believe, that the anti-slavery question is more important than any now agitated in politics. They are therefore bound in consistency and sound policy, to make it the *test question*. So long as they refrain from doing this, they say in effect that it is not of paramount importance, and pursue the very course calculated to confirm the public mind in this error. If it be indeed of more importance than any other political question, common sense dictates that those who so regard it, should vote for no one who is not sound in his opinions respecting it; for until they adopt this course, they will never induce others to act right. But, Mr. Rankin's position is a virtual postponement of this most important question, for the sake of what he believes upon the whole is the best for the country. Just as if any good of importance could be expected from a government, essentially vitiated in its policy, and acting in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of civil polity. Mr. Rankin will admit, that the great disturbing force in our government is, the Slave-Power; that the great fountain of political, and a principal source of moral, corruption in this nation, is Slavery. So long as *this* shall continue and that shall rule, the evil that may be done by governments independently of their influence, and the good to be expected from an administration under their control, will be comparatively insignificant,—so insignificant as to render a choice between candidates bound by their power, a matter of little moment. Besides the simple fact, of competitors for office in a republic—founded on the principle of equality of rights—being pledged to slavery, a system intended on the ruins of all rights, creates a presumption against their moral and political integrity, which should suffice to disqualify them in the estimation of real republicans for any office whatever. Notwithstanding all this, Mr. Rankin, for the sake of a good, insignificant in itself, and scarcely to be expected from the action of officers chosen on account of their *defection from correct principle*, would postpone what he believes is the most important of political questions, and, in derogation of its claims, sustain a slavery ticket!

White Maintained, Slavery Cannot Be Abolished.

2. Were all abolitionists agreed in this position, so long as they should maintain it, slavery could not, by peaceful means, be abolished. Slaveholders with one voice declare to the politician that, if none of the candidates claiming their suffrages be pro-slavery, they will vote for none. Abolitionists, on the contrary, are at pains to assure him in the language of Mr. Rankin, that, if none of the candidates be an abolitionist, they will vote for that slaveholding or anti-abolition man who, they believe on the whole will do most for the country." Now, as the mere politician studies chiefly his own interest, he of course will always make it his business to gratify the slaveholder. Were the whole north thus abolitionized, a batch of southern aristocrats would still give us our presidents, ay, and our legislators too, until abolitionists should abandon this ground of Mr. Rankin, and resolve to vote for none but *freemen*. Let us press this consideration on the reader. The slaveholder and the abolitionist are the antagonists in this great struggle. The former plants his foot on a rock, and declares, "I will never vote for an abolitionist." The latter ventures to say that he would prefer greatly not to vote for a slaveholder, but he will do it, if he can find none better. The slaveholder clearly makes slavery the *test question*, the *paramount consideration*. If so, what does the abolitionist? Make abolition paramount? No—he succumbs to the slaveholder, and votes for his candidate, thus conceding by his vote, in fact, that *slavery is the major consideration*.

Again we ask the question we so often have asked; how long will it take to abolish slavery by such policy? a policy, which rallies the abolitionist under the banner of slavery, and makes every vote he casts count one for the support of the system.

3. It Involves the Support of Slave-laws and Slave-Policy.

This leads us to say, that it is a position which, whether Mr. Rankin will or not, involves him in the support of slave-laws and slave-policy. Let us try his principle in other cases.

Here is a community, blasted by the curse of intemperance, rapidly driving heading to perdition. Its laws encourage distilleries and gaming-drawshops. Premiums are annually offered for the manufacture of the choicest liquors. The entire policy of the government is in favor of drunkenness. A reforming movement is set on foot. The wickedness and dreadful effects of intemperance, of the grog-shop system, and the policy of the government which encourages the evil, are discussed and denounced. Many are converted to the cause of temperance, and they agree as to the duty of using all their moral and political power to renovate the Commonwealth. The community is divided into two political parties. One of them perceives that capital may be raised from the temperance movement, drags it into politics, takes up the cause of drunkenness, and denounces the measures and advocates of reform. The other finds it necessary to show equal zeal. It avows its friendship to the license system—stigmatizes its opponents as disturbers of the common peace—pledges itself to uphold the rights of drunkards. Both parties demand a profession of holiness to temperance, as a condition to office. Now let us ask a few questions. Would it be consistent for temperance men to give their votes to either of such parties? Would it not sound ridiculous for an eloquent advocate of reform, to talk of the propriety of yielding support to that drunkard, who, on the whole "would do most for the country"? Do we not see that the government of such a community would be just as safe, so far as essentials were concerned, in the hands of one set of rum-drinkers and rum-patrons, as another? Could it be changed, would draw-shops be abolished, world distilleries given the lie to their own professions. Their creed, put forth on the birth-day of the Republic, in the sight of the world, under the solemn sanctions of oath, when they called God to witness to the rectitude of their intentions, and honesty of their convictions, declares—*It is a PLEDGED SLAVERY TICKET*, which he supports.

Let us repeat again, that our confidence in the Christian character of Mr. Rankin is undiminished. We are now exposing what we believe to be, the real character of the policy he recommends.

4. It Necessarily Involves a Violation of Good Faith.

Abolitionists have always contended, that southern people in holding slaves, the northern people in countenancing slavery, and the whole nation in upholding slave-laws, have practically given the lie to their own professions. Their creed, put forth on the birth-day of the Republic, in the sight of the world, under the solemn sanctions of oath, when they called God to witness to the rectitude of their intentions, and honesty of their convictions, declares—*It is a PLEDGED SLAVERY TICKET*, which he supports.

Another case. (We dwell upon these illustrations, rather than merely glance at them, so that the mind may have a full conception of the absurdity, shall we call it? of the principle we are discussing. And we select cases not the most agreeable to a refined taste, because we are convinced that we shall never deal faithfully with slavery in church or state, until we reduce it to its proper grade—ranking it with the most deplorable crimes.)

Let us suppose fornication is encouraged among by law. Public provision is made for illegitimate. Brothels are licensed all over the country, constituting a source of public revenue. Marriage is discouraged by rigid restrictions. So far have custom and law contributed to strip every candidate for a federal office, is that he be either an *oppressor himself*, or a *pledged supporter of oppression*—in other words, that either practically or professionally *falsify* the vital principles, to the steadfast, and perpetual support of which, the nation is sworn. Only on this condition, will this nation confer office upon him. Now we do, not the American people, every time they elect a president of the United States, under such circumstances, break their faith to God and man,—violate the solemn oath which consecrated them a nation! The people of Ohio, in the eighth article of their constitution, after providing that no religious test shall be required as a qualification for office, declare—"But religion, morality, and knowledge being essentially necessary to the good government and happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged by legislative provision, not inconsistent with the rights of conscience." They thus pledge themselves to each other & to the world, that they will always countenance religion and morality, and encourage the dissemination of knowledge by schools and other means of instruction. Now suppose with a few exceptions, every second year since the formation of their constitution, they had elected as their governor, a man notorious for his ignorance and his opposition to the spread of knowledge, religion and morality—that they had chosen him for this very reason, in opposition to candidates, distinguished for their devotion to universal education whom for this very reason, they had rejected. Would they not be justly chargeable with violating their plighted faith, with falsifying their own declarations? We are aware it may be said, that the cases are not parallel. The Declaration of Independence is not the *Constitution of the United States*. True, but it is a document more noble, more sublime, more imperative in its obligations. That document is an agreement, not between the citizens of the United States, as to the details of their government, but an agreement with the world and with the Supreme Ruler of the world, to the principles by which the American people bound themselves forever to be controlled, whatever form of government they might adopt. Have they ever repudiated this Declaration? They could not do it. The principles therein recognized in regard to human rights are immutable, and everlasting in their obligation. Repeat it! Why, does not the whole nation once every year present itself before God, read this Declaration, and renew their oath of allegiance to its principles, "appealing

to the Supreme Ruler of the world for the rectitude of their intentions?" And this it does, while every four years it confers its highest offices on the men, who can give the clearest evidence of their disregard of those principles! Such perfidy is horrible.

We change upon the position, assumed by Mr. Rankin, that it is identical with the position of the whole American people. An abolitionist, who votes for a candidate, set up because he is a *slaveholder*, or for one who *electorates for himself on the ground that he is favorable to the pretensions of slaveholders, friendly to slavery, or unfriendly to movements against it*, joins with the multitude in falsifying the principles of the Declaration of Independence. This is a hard saying, but where is the flaw in our argument? Point it out, and we will confess we have done injustice to our friend. Let us repeat again, we separate the noble nisan, from this most base and ruinous position. We may be mistaken. We do not wish to dogmatize. Our venerable friend has grey hairs on his side; nevertheless, with some difference, we claim that *truth is on our side*.

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2. Another Unsound Position.

Mr. Rankin says, that he is at least as much bound to prevent the election of Martin Van Buren as of General Garrison. If he stay away from the polls or cast his vote for a third ticket, he does in effect vote for the former.

In the first place, the assumption reflects strongly upon democratic abolitionists. It seems to take for granted that they are either exceedingly few, or else too enslaved by their party to sunder the ties which bind them to it. This is a mistake. We have recently made a good deal of inquiry, and find that there are far more democrats in our ranks, than we had supposed. In this county, a considerable portion of our number belongs to that party; and it is just to say, that we have not yet found one, who would vote for Martin Van Buren. On the contrary, very many of the *whig* abolitionists in Cincinnati have resolved to subordinate their to party preferences. J. B. Mahan, writing from Sardinia, Brown, etc., bears similar testimony to the fidelity of democratic abolitionists in this region. It would be well, if our leading men, when discussing this question, would bear these facts in mind. *Invidious allusions to a particular party, are mischievous, and detrimental to their own influence.* It becomes abolitionists to deal impartially with both parties. A remark of Mr. Mahan seems to explain this difference in the strength of the party attachments of the two classes of abolitionists. The democrats have no hope of their party, the whigs do expect something from theirs, because they have not yet seen it in power.

But, this assumption of Mr. Rankin is constantly pressed by Garrison abolitionists, as if they thought that, should Martin Van Buren succeed through our refusal to vote, we should just as guilty of electing him as if we had voted for him. This is neither logic nor candor in such a course. I refuse to go a journey with my friend, and he is robbed in consequence. My refusal is the same in effect, as if I had robbed him—that is, he is stripped of his property. But, is there a moral difference between the two acts? The act of robbing is wicked in itself, and would necessarily involve me in guilt. The act of refusing to journey with him, might be right or wrong, according to circumstances. There might be good & sufficient reasons for it, in which case, no part of my friends' misfortune could be charged on me. Mr. Rankin holds these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The adoption of this creed was a sublime religious act. Publishing it to the world, and appealing to God for their sincerity, they necessarily plighted their faith to God and man, that they would always within their empire, faithfully and fully carry out in practice these grand principles. From the date of the Declaration up to this hour, their faith has been broken. They have deceived the world, they have insulted God. Their republic bears the brand of a Lie, upon its forehead. Hundreds of thousands of slaves have found refuge in the grave from their oppression, and their blood is crying to God for vengeance on a perjured nation. Nearly three millions of living victims are now writhing in the deadly grasp of their power. An essential requisite in the character of every candidate for a federal office is, that he be either an *oppressor himself*, or a *pledged supporter of oppression*—in other words, that either practically or professionally *falsify* the vital principles, to the steadfast, and perpetual support of which, the nation is sworn. Only on this condition, will this nation confer office upon him. Now we do, not the American people, every time they elect a president of the United States, under such circumstances, break their faith to God and man,—violate the solemn oath which consecrated them a nation! They have deceived the world, they have insulted God. Their republic bears the brand of a Lie, upon its forehead. Hundreds of thousands of slaves have found refuge in the grave from their oppression, and their blood is crying to God for vengeance on a perjured nation. Nearly three millions of living victims are now writhing in the deadly grasp of their power. 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is naked deformity the evil they advocate, and thus convives others.

We come now to the time, when the whig party was formally organized as a *national* party—when a common nomination broke up northern sectionaries, and imposed the necessity of a common policy. Be it remembered, that the organization extended North and South; that perfect union was necessary to insure success;

that the South for the last twenty years has been at war with the North; that slaveholders who were associationists then, and now are secessionists, have made it the supreme consideration—*Bear in mind all this, and you will be prepared to understand, what that common policy now—*

To call to mind too the composition of the whig party, and you will see at once in the character and affinities of two of its classes the reasons why they should not feel very sensitive as to the adoption of a pro-slavery policy.

At first fearful of throwing off those who had been conciliated by favorable tokens, the whole party moved cautiously. While slavery was not condemned, neither was abolition denounced. In a little while, however, driven to disclose its true character by the repeated charges of its opponents, in danger of losing the South, encouraged by certain indications in the Virginia, presuming that abolitionists on the whole were pretty generally committed, and commanded by the Slave-Power—the demagogues, office-seekers, and statesmen, came openly and broadly against abolition, act the assumption that anti-abolition is a requisite to office, and endeavor to supersede the democracy on its own ground—that of slavery.

We refer now to the conduct of General Harrison, of Daniel Webster, and the whig leaders at Alexandria, of Osgood Hoffman at Frederickburg, to the policy of the whig press in the free states, and to the unbeknown, unavowed anti-slavery policy of the whole party in the South, &c. &c. These developments have excited no displeasure, that we can see, in the second class, the principal element of the party; nor has the conduct of the third class been such as became freemen, or was calculated to impose restraint on their leaders.

The question now to be decided is, can abolitionists reasonably expect more in behalf of their cause from the whig party, in the event of its success, than from the democratic? We answer no, and found our opinion on the following reasons.

1. The two great classes which go to make up the whig party have never, as such, shown any friendhip for the rights of the slave.—Their affinities even now are generally with the slave-holder.

2. The favorable indications which some gather from the past action of the party, are of a *dans anterior* to its national organization, while as yet it was an uncertain minority, before it was bandied together in the support of a nomination, controlled by the South, and before it was placed under the surveillance of the Slave Power; and of course can constitute no ground for judging what will be the action of the party when all the circumstances are changed.

3. Since then, it has equalled the rival party in open defiance of principle on the slavery question, and in gross concessions and pledges of fealty to the slaveholder, thus authorizing us to infer, that the same power which impels to the adoption of this policy now, being permanent in its character, will produce the same result after the election.

4. The third class of the party has refrained from rebuking this policy, and has exerted no influence in restraining it. Therefore, we can expect nothing from its influence hereafter, for the same reasons which now keep it silent, viz., the alleged greater depravity of the democratic party, and the importance of certain questions regarding the currency and public money, will continue to operate.

5. The party would be stronger immediately after than before its triumph; for multitudes always crowd to worship the rising sun. Therefore we can hope nothing from its weakness.

6. The same important political questions, which now furnish a pretext for postponing the claims of the anti-slavery cause, and an apology for the servile conduct of the whig leaders, cannot, as every man of sense knows, be settled for the next three or four years. Consequently during that time, they will furnish the same pretext, the same apology, for like postponement and conduct.

If such be the event, and we certainly have all the reasons that common sense can demand for predicting that it will be, what policy would Mr. Rankin and Mr. Blanchard and their friends then adopt? They would begin to think it high time to change the administration. They would talk of its evil corruptions—it's growing power—it's encroachments on the rights of the people—or the necessity of keeping the sea power in motion—of the opposition-party being on the whole more favorable—for (of course, as a minority it would be powerless) for the time a very civil and moderate course)—and any way owing to its weakness, it could be more easily dislodged. So to work they would go, advising all good abolitionists to support the candidates of the minority, notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence that might be furnished in the sequel of its proslavery bondage.

Thus forever would they keep the nation writhing within the folds of the slave-power.

7. The same important political questions, which now furnish a pretext for postponing the claims of the anti-slavery cause, and an apology for the servile conduct of the whig leaders, always dictated to them by the slaveholder. Our brethren must excuse us. For such low management, we can find no better name for this policy, we have no taste. Compare it with the course of action now advocated by so many abolitionists.

We plant our foot on the ground, that no master which of the present parties may be in power, the slaveholder will dictate

the measures of government—slavery will be the controlling element of its policy. Our principle then is, a principle by which we are willing to stand or fall, that we ought not to vote for any candidate for office, who is not openly hostile to the evil, and in favor of carrying out faithfully the principles of the Declaration of Independence. We care not what party may win or lose, in consequence of this determination, for no real good can be gained to the country till the government be rescued from the grasp of the slaveholders; and never will this be done, till the people of the North resolve not to vote for a slaveholder, or a man who will support or defend his practice; and this will never be, till abolitionists set a noble example. Here is fair and open ground. On it we stand above the low strife of parties. It brings us into exalted association with the fathers of our republic. It elevates our principles above danger, and saves our character as anti-slavery men.

Few indeed we may now be, but if there be half the principle and sagacity in this nation which is claimed for it, we must increase, and our opponents decrease.

One or two general remarks, and we shall conclude. It seems to us providential, that the pro-slavery corruption of the whig party should have become manifest in time. For a period it was so cautious in movement, that abolitionists were near being deceived, and were strongly tempted to become careless of their principles, but the cloven foot was shown in season to prove to them the presence of a demon, and admonish them to beware of an unclean party. And now in the name of common sense, we ask, what more reasons than they have, could they have, why they should not vote for either party?

There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood doth lead to fortune. So said old Shakespeare; and the wise man says, there is a time for everything. To have stampeded immediately after the last election, to enlist abolitionists against a slavery-ticket would have been labor wasted. And why? Because no ticket was before them—an important election was pending—no special sets of hostility to free principles were arousing indignation against both parties—no reason existed for discussion or decision.—Politicians themselves never think of organizing till the time for action draws nigh. It has been recommended to wait until after the coming contest and then organize. Where would be your forces? What your reasons? What would remain to be done?—And where would be those feelings of patriotic indignation and grief which now glow in the breasts of abolitionists? "Strike while the iron is hot."

This is good advice. We are all now warm. Recent developments have produced great excitement. A genuine anti-slavery enthusiasm prevails in our ranks. And are we to let all this evaporate in idle talk and boastful promises of what we will do at some future period? Postpone action at this time, and the generous enthusiasm, which now infuses and excites your hearts, will gradually die out. Now, now is the time to act. The nearer the time, for a decision, the easier to decide. The more intense the feeling, the more energetic will be the action.

Never let us forget, that the slaveholder has undervalued our sincerity. Once convince him that there is a hand of freedom in the free states resolved to sacrifice all party attachments rather than vote for a slave-holder—resolved at the hazard of annihilating every existing political party, to place the government in the hands of the Slave Power; and of course can constitute no ground for judging what will be the action of the party when all the circumstances are changed.

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The following is from the Hamilton Intelligencer, edited by an anti-slavery man.

"We would advise the Cincinnati Philanthropist for the sake of consistency, to put under its editorial head, something like this: 'For President of the U.S. Martin Van Buren—Sub-Treasurer—John Price—Secretary of War—Gen. Winfield Scott—Gen. Scott—Gen. Scott—Black hairy dog & Gag laws.' Such would be the end of its operations, and it certainly would be proper to mention it." The Monroe (Mich.) Times, says—

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our friends Rankin and Blanchard. These same letters we find quoted as containing excellent sentiments by several papers in the state, which from year's end to year's end, scarcely have a word to say of the slave.

The Urban Citizen says—

"The Anti-Slavery Society, the original organ of the Loco-foco, and the Philanthropist, the leading Abolition paper in the State, are becoming very rabid in their opposition to Gen. Garrison, since the commencement of the dog-days. Has the Loco-foco and the ultra abolitionists of Ohio formed a coalition for the purpose of defeating Old Tip in this State?—We ask for information—this is all."

And is that all? No. You intended to convey a false impression by that question, neighbor, or we are greatly mistaken. As for the Statesman we have no dealings with it—never have exchanged with it—never seen it. Are you really so ignorant as to suspect such a coalition? O shame!

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This is all humbuggery, friend.

The Democratic papers are no less friendly.

The Monroe (Mich.) Times, says—

"If the abolitionists are really honest in the course they have chosen, they certainly deserve credit at least for consistency, and so far we have not a word to say. If they cannot consistently with their professions support either of the nominated candidates, they ought at all events to let them know that their votes are to be withheld."

Let me add, that the writer of this article is honest.

It is however, now to inquire how far the abolitionists are acting in good faith in supporting a third candidate and whether their whole movement is not in fact another of those "strange and wicked tricks" of which we are told to despatch people, when it is not a game to pacify the southern "whigs," and make them believe that Gen. Garrison is in favor of the slaveholding interest."

And then he goes into an argument to show that this is the real scheme, concluding as follows:

"We may have under-rated the sincerity of the abolitionists in the course they have chosen, so far as we have done; but we will look for the motives before we can be brought to the belief that they are honest in their movements. Their voice in November will be the strongest test."

The Louisville Advertiser also complements the sincerity of Abolitionists.

"The Abolitionists had been made to believe that they

would find a faithful and efficient ally in the *abolite*, and it would seem they cannot brook disappointment in this connection. In New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania we have been told that abolitionists have been won over to the side of the *abolite*.

They demand Mr. Van Buren, but as far as we have an open enemy is preferable to a hollow-hearted friend.

We know not, however, what to make of the demonstrations to which we witness. We cannot do less than suspect they are designed to deceive the people of the South, and that the Convention proposed in New York, and the meeting to be held in Boston, are separate organizations. They demand Mr. Van Buren, but as far as we have an open enemy is preferable to a hollow-hearted friend.

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